



2024-2025

ROTC STAFF RIDE PROGRAM

“The battlefield teaches us timeless lessons about the human dimensions of conflict.”

Major General Bob Scales



The Battle of Gettysburg by Paul Philippoteaux (1883)

MORE THAN A BATTLEFIELD TOUR

We offer an immersive, overnight learning experience in which ROTC Cadets engage with the concepts of leadership and military operations by analyzing decision-making during battle and the universal study of war fighting as part of the battle field staff ride commissioning requirement for all ROTC Cadets.

Participants will understand how human beings act in times of crisis, adaptation to changing conditions is essential, leadership styles, and the challenges all military leaders face.

"Battlefields can help them see how leaders' decisions influence tactical outcomes...Those observations, when combined with curiosity and diligence, lay the groundwork for a lifetime of professional reading and will produce officers who are mentally prepared for a warfighting role."

Brigadier General Harold W. Nelson

[ArmyHeritage.org](https://www.armyheritage.org)





WHAT TO EXPECT

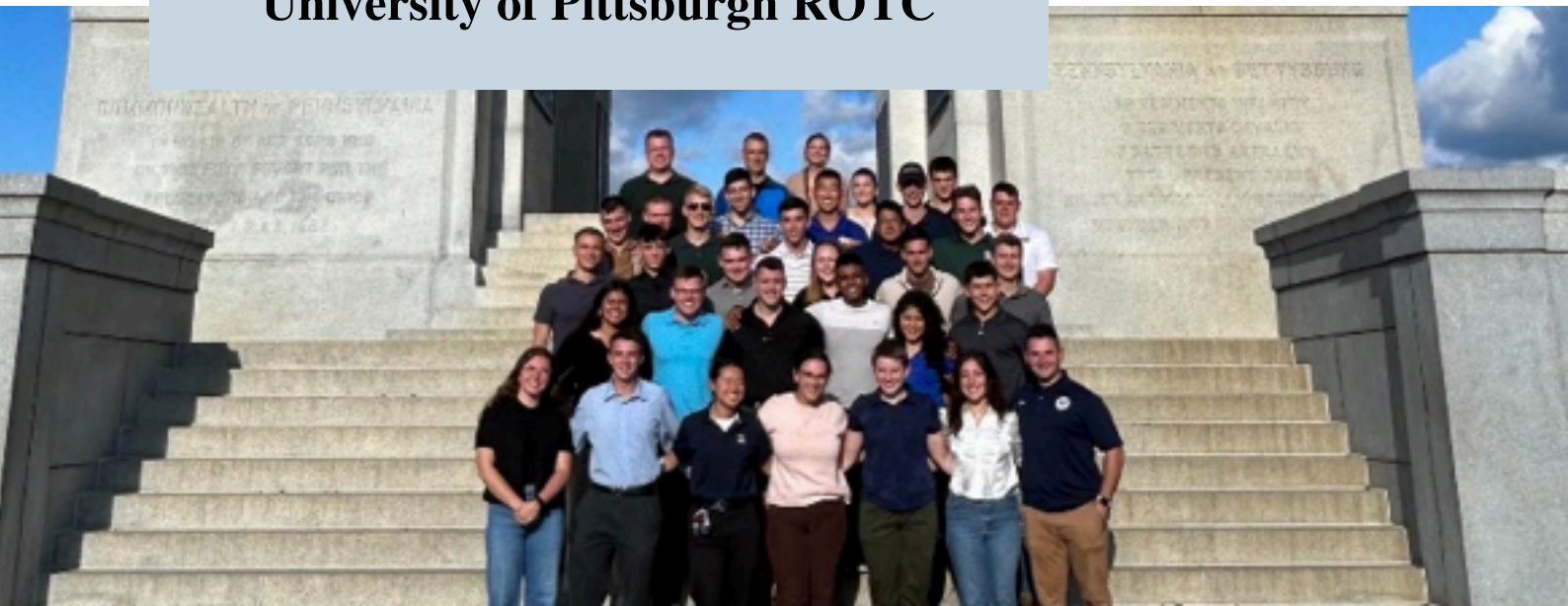
Learn with the Generals. Walk where the officers and enlisted soldiers of the Civil War fought across the rolling grasses of the Gettysburg battlefield-- where generations have immersed themselves in the decision-makers and choices of the past in order to become the Army leaders of the future.

Battlefield staff rides are a highly involved and integrated learning opportunity. Your participation is required.

What Sets Us Apart

Our program was designed exclusively for us by acclaimed Civil War historian Dr. Carol Reardon, George Winfree Professor emerita of American History at Penn State University and a member of the Gettysburg Foundation Board of Directors. Our curriculum asks Cadets to apply the lessons of Gettysburg to situations they will face as future Army officers. It is truly living history.

University of Pittsburgh ROTC





University of Delaware ROTC

NEW IN 2024-2025

As part of the newly-funded Colonel Donald Esper ROTC Staff Ride Endowment, a gift of Bob and Nancy Gessner, beginning in spring 2025, the program will include:

- National program expansion
- Veteran retraining in current Army doctrine of certified battlefield guides
- Scholarship funds for travel and lodging
- Admittance to the film *A New Birth of Freedom*, the Cyclorama painting, and the Gettysburg Museum of the Civil War at the Gettysburg National Military Park Museum & Visitor Center
- Development of a trial program for JROTC (Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps)

Don Esper (1927-2023) served in combat in the Pacific during WWII. He graduated in 1950 with a degree in Business Administration from Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio, where he was an Army ROTC cadet and received his Army commission as an Armor Second Lieutenant in April 1951. His final tour of duty was as Garrison Commander at Carlisle Barracks. Don retired in 1980 after 34 years of military service.

“The Civil War was our greatest struggle and continues to deserve our deep study and contemplation.”

Richard H. Stewart

Chief Historian, U.S. Army Center of Military History

ArmyHeritage.org

